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Rosa Parks Research Paper

**Question:** How did Rosa Parks contribute to the Civil Rights Movement?

Rosa Parks was a vital African American woman in the Civil Rights Movement. In 1955 Parks was sitting in the front of the colored section on one of the city buses in Montgomery, Alabama when the bus started to fill up. A white man got stuck standing and the driver told her that she had to get up and give her seat to the man and to other white people getting on the bus. The other blacks had moved towards the back but Parks decided to protest and refused to give her seat up. The police came to the scene and she was soon arrested but was released on bail. She sparked a yearlong boycott on the city buses in Montgomery where many more people helped to protest for their rights. After the boycott a U.S. Supreme Court case was made called *Browder v. Gayle* which deemed segregation on the buses unconstitutional. Parks was also very important because she helped bring about the rise of Martin Luther King Jr. He was one of the most influential and important activists in African American history. Rosa Park’s efforts as an activist, and her courageous attitude to stand up for her rights made an integral contribution to The Civil Rights Movements in many ways by inspiring others to make a change for equal rights.

Rosa Parks was an African American woman born in Tuskegee, Alabama February 4, 1913. She still lived in Alabama when she met her husband who was the first activist she met and was a member of the NAACP who influenced her. Parks was tired of being pushed around by white people since she was black and being denied of the rights she should be able to have. She registered once she turned 21 to vote and failed a literacy test twice even though she had been through schooling and could easily pass the test. She was also tired of having to follow the city bus rules which were to board the bus in the back after stepping in the front door to pay the fare and blacks could only sit in the back of the bus while the whites sat in the front. Once Rosa Parks became one of the two women in the NAACP in 1943 she began to stand up for herself. Once in a while she would sneak through the front of the bus with the other white people instead of having to walk all the way to the back of the bus. When she did this the driver grabbed her by the coat and told her to leave; then she re-entered through the back of the bus. On December 1, 1955 Parks had left work to board the bus. She then realized she had the same bus driver who tried to kick her off the bus twelve years earlier so she decided to board the bus on the through the front and take a seat in front of the black section. The bus filled up and a white man was left standing so she was ordered by the driver to get up. Rosa Parks refused and the driver called the police which lead to her getting arrested. She was released on bail and a trial was soon set up. Parks protested because she proclaimed, "People always say that I didn't give up by seat because I was tired, but that isn't true. I was not tired physically... The only tired I was, was tired of giving up." (Rosa Parks). She started a year long bus boycott on the city buses in Montgomery. It finally ended in 1956 when the U.S. deemed it unconstitutional for segregation on the city buses in the court case of *Browder v. Gayle.*

One of the ways Rosa Parks contributed to the Civil Rights movement was by sparking a yearlong boycott on the City Buses in Montgomery Alabama after her arrest. This is important because it inspired other people to also protest against their unequal rights. One day after Parks was arrested on December 1, 1955, a leaflet was sent out to all citizens in Montgomery to help support her. It resulted in 90% of African Americans boycotting on the city buses. Without blacks riding the bus the transportation companies suffered financially. To transport themselves to different areas of the city they made their own transportation system. They set up thirty two pickup stations with twenty cars and fourteen station wagons to transport people to where they needed to go. They even had their own fare of ten cents per each ride. This was a problem because the regular bus fare was eighteen dollars on the city buses and they were threatened they would be arrested if they didn’t charge the regular fare. White women of the household had to transport their black housekeepers to where they needed to go which affected them. There were even white supporters that protested and felt that segregation on the city buses was unequal and not right. Some of these whites as well as many of the African Americans got threats and violence against them such as being subject to bombings in their homes. Police even tried to stop the protest with force. “The city police tried to disrupt the protest by harassing groups of blacks who were waiting at city bus stops for the black-owned cabs and by threatening to arrest cabdrivers if they did not charge their regular fare.” (Phelps, Lehman). Many blacks lost their jobs for supporting the protest as well. Rosa Park’s husband even lost his job as a barber because he was in support of the protest. Parks contributed to the Civil Rights Movement by inspiring others to protest during the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Rosa Park’s efforts as a strong activist lead to the problems of the bus protest in Alabama to go to the Supreme Court. The *Browder v. Gayle* court case took over this problem. On December 20 a three judge panel of court members deemed that segregation on buses is unconstitutional. It ruled two to one that it violated the black’s fourteenth amendment rights which protect all citizen’s rights to be equal among everyone. The people protesting boycotted until the decision was complete but once it was final everyone stopped. Parks had ignited the bus boycotts on the city buses which brought about the very important Supreme Court Case which deemed segregation on buses unconstitutional.

One of the most important things Parks helped contribute to was the emergence of one of the most famous activists of all time: Martin Luther King Jr. After the Boycott by Rosa parks on the city bus, four days later on December 5, 1955, members of the African American community went to the Holt Street Baptist church. Since King was a reverend and was used to leading and speaking in front of crowds he calmed the angry crown of people that gathered at the church. Here he stated that they will protest peacefully and nonviolently also beginning the Civil rights Movement. He also exclaimed that they will no longer take being pushed around by whites and that they need to fight for their rights. "to say to those who have mistreated us so long that we are tired—tired of being segregated and humiliated; tired of being kicked about by the brutal feet of oppression." (Martin Luther King Jr.) His peaceful ideas have been famously known throughout history. He was very adamant on treating their unequal rights through protesting and speaking with power but not violently. “In our protest there will be no cross burnings…. We will be guided by the highest principles of law and order. Our method will be that of persuasion, not coercion.” (Martin Luther King Jr.) After his leadership efforts at the church he was chosen to lead the Montgomery Improvement Association. This association created the Montgomery bus boycott which lasted for more than a year and lead to the desegregation of city buses. Soon after his efforts in leadership, he continued to do even bigger things. In 1963 King lead the Million Man March in the mall in Washington D.C. Literally millions of people gathered at the Lincoln Memorial to hear the inspirational and famous speech by Martin Luther King Jr. called “I Have a Dream.” His first line of his speech explained "We are gathered here to collect ourselves for a responsibility that God is placing on our shoulders to move this nation toward a more perfect union." (Martin Luther King Jr.) His speech is one of the most famous that’s ever been recorded in history. His efforts even lead to the Civil Rights Act to be passed. It created a bigger federal role in protecting the rights of African Americans and it even had voting protection. This is what King had been working on to improve his whole career. But without Rosa Parks to begin the bus protest and to inspire King, he probably wouldn’t have risen to fame and did all the important things he has done for African Americans in history.

Rosa Parks was a crucial component to launching the Civil Rights Movement. Her famous efforts for standing up for herself by not giving up her seat for a white man on the Montgomery City Bus sparked many other Civil Rights leaders and protests to occur. She sparked a yearlong bus boycott through many African American people to not use the city buses in Montgomery, Alabama. This also led to the problems going to the Supreme Court case *Browder v. Gayle* which deemed segregation on the buses unconstitutional. One of the most important contributions Rosa Parks had to the movement was influencing Martin Luther King Jr. to rise up to become a great leader. Since Rosa Parks stood up for herself and became a well known activist, it triggered people and protests to make changes for African Americans throughout the Civil Rights Movement.